



Claudia Salazar

Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Claudia Salazar

SCHOOL: Sharpstein Elementary

Position: 3rd Grade Dual Language

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 5 years

Q. Why do you have your students grow plants for their science unit?

A. We are growing Wisconsin Fast Plants under a grow light in our classroom. The kids love their plants. The first thing students do when they come into class is check on their plants. They are constantly measuring them and checking to see how much they have grown. Since it's their own plant, they are anxious to learn all its parts and its lifecycle.

Q. What other important skills do they learn by this activity?

A. They learn to take ownership. It's not like I planted the seeds for them or gave them a plant that is already grown. They have been able to take it from a seed, to a small plant, to one that keeps getting bigger.

Q. How do the plants help your students learn math?

A. I have the students log the measurements of their plants. I also teach them how to make a graph to chart the progress.

Q. How much Spanish do native English speakers know by 3rd grade?

A. Third grade is the first year the students are fully immersed in 50 percent Spanish. They spend half of their day learning exclusively in English and the other half entirely in Spanish. Many students are at what we call the "silent period" of their learning. In other words, they understand what I am saying but are not necessarily speaking as much Spanish.

Q. How do you help them get beyond the silent period?

A. I use a lot of GLAD strategies. I use visuals such as posters and charts. I team the students with their buddies so they work together. It takes a lot of repetition. I do whatever it takes so they get the most out of my class.

Over



MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM
CLAUDIA SALAZAR'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM CLAUDIA...

I am a second language learner, so I think my story helps motivate my students. I moved here when I was seven. I didn't speak any English. I tell my students how important it is to be bilingual. If I can do it, certainly they can too.

The dual language program is very effective. Not only do the students learn a second language, they also make friends with someone from a different culture.



I was a para-educator in the district for three years. During that time I always knew I wanted my own classroom. It's the greatest feeling having a class of my own.